In the course of the day the great tidings came that General Grant had taken Vickshurg and made the whole garrison of that Confederate stronghold prisoners of war. That was a great victory—a complete victory—and great was the cheering along our lines when we heard of it. But there was also among many of the officers of the Army of the Potomac, deep-down, a depressing consciousness that ours was not, what it might have been, a complete victory. To be sure, we had fought a great battle—and fought it bravely; our losses were enormous, over twenty-five per cent, of the whole force, and the losses of the enemy could hardly be less; we had disastrously repulsed a fierce attack of the Confederates and inflicted upon them a terrible blow. But now, on the day after that great event, there stood the enemy—having, indeed, withdrawn from the field fought over during the preceding three days, but only to concentrate his forces in a strong defensive position on that very Seminary Ridge from which he had been directing his offensive movements—there he stood, within sight of us, within cannon-shot, grimly daring us to attack him, and we did not move.

The situation seemed almost humiliating when we remembered that the day before, after the repulse of Pickett's charge, with three hours of daylight to spare, we might, by a resolute and vigorous counter-charge by our whole disposable force, have achieved a real victory over Lee's army, a victory which might

have stopped this mainstay of the Confederacy of most of its power of mischief. I have always esteemed General Meade's character so highly that I am loath to join his critics on any point. But I have always understood it to be one of the first of the rules of war—which, in fact, are nothing but the rules of common sense applied to the business of war—that when you have dealt the enemy a blow which destroys his strength at some important point, and which confuses and demoralizes